



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 3

COUNCILMEMBER KSHAMA SAWANT

Sunday, June 23, 2019

Dear King County Councilmembers and Executive Constantine,

I am writing to urge you to pass Just Cause Eviction protections throughout King County similar to Seattle's Just Cause Eviction Ordinance to reduce the predatory, discriminatory, and baseless evictions of King County residents.

Many of you may know Mergitu Argo, a longstanding and highly-respected community organizer in King County. She is currently employed by the City of Seattle, doing outreach for Seattle's Democracy Voucher program. Before that, she worked for years both for One America and SEIU 775, defending the rights of people facing abuse and discrimination.

Ms. Argo and her family, and two of her fellow tenants, have been given a 20-day "Notice to Terminate Tenancy" by their landlord (attached). In other words, Ms. Argo has essentially been told that it doesn't matter that she has paid rent on time. It doesn't matter that she has been a tenant in good standing for 14 years. It doesn't matter that her neighbors have used their own money to carry out substantive repairs on their apartments. They are simply told they must leave, with no reason of any kind given, or alternate accommodation.

If they'd lived just 1.2 miles up the road, they would've lived within Seattle city limits, and could not legally be evicted in this way, because of the Just Cause Eviction Ordinance. But because they live in unincorporated King County, they have no legal protection.

Without Just Cause Eviction protections, we can only speculate as to why these three tenants have been targeted for eviction. We do not know because the landlord has not given a reason, and is legally not required to give a reason, for kicking people out.

I will be hosting Ms. Argo and her fellow tenants, and community members, at my Seattle City Council Renters Rights committee meeting on Tuesday, June 25 at 2:00pm. You are invited to join us at the table for the discussion, and if you are willing to sponsor Just Cause Eviction protections countywide, that news will be a welcome addition to the discussion.

Please end unjust evictions in King County, and join us on June 25 to discuss passing these renter rights protections.

Thank you,

Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant